



LESSONS LEARNT FROM HEALTH SCIENCE EDUCATION: PROBLEM BASED-LEARNING AUGMENTED WITH INTERPROFESSIONAL EDUCATION: GIVING BUSINESS STUDENTS A POWERFUL GLIMPSE INTO A REAL-WORLD WORK ENVIRONMENT

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ABSTRACT

21st Century learners are forcing educators to think differently in their delivery of curriculum. The twinning of scenario case based problems with interprofessional education principles has been perfected in Health Sciences education and now is poised to move into Business education and other professional disciplines. By applying these two powerful educational practices we are helping students accelerate their confidence on their respective employment journeys.

KEY WORDS: Problem Based Learning, Interprofessional education, Curriculum, Change Management.

INTRODUCTION:

All throughout the history of education different pedagogical methods have been utilized. From the beginning of time, methods used to teach students have ranged from literally forced feeding material and memorization to today's more sophisticated educational delivery systems. Different professions have utilized different methodologies to help students understand and apply the knowledge that was passed on from the classroom experience. In the last 10 years, the Health Sciences field has embraced a coupling of problem based learning (PBL) with interprofessional education. This educational approach has been proven to be a powerful force in the application of acquired knowledge. The graduates who experience this type of learning adapt quickly to the everchanging demands of working in 21st century workplaces. This dynamism of education is poised for further dissemination and utilization in other professions other than Health Sciences and Medicine. One area that could greatly reap the benefits of this new educational pedagogical approach is the field of Business education. The Centre for Business at George Brown College was excited to undertake the journey to rewrite curriculum such that students would receive a realistic glimpse of working in the 21st century business world. Student and faculty satisfaction exceeded our expectations to this new way of learning. Moreover our community partners were excited about the new students acquired skills from our transformation. The insertion of case based learning coupled with interprofessional education has elevated the skillsets of our Centre for Business graduates.

Problem based Learning:

Problem based learning (PBL) is defined as "an instructional method characterized by the use of patient problems as in contacts for students to learn problem solving skills and acquire knowledge about the basic in clinical sciences" (Albanese and Mitchell, 1993). A distinction between PBL and case-based learning should be made; in PBL the problem is presented first without prior teaching of the basic principles whereas the case-based approach involves learning the basic science or clinical concepts before encountering the problem.

The problem-based format involves introducing students to a problem which is followed by group discussion. The self-directed research which follows, is shared with the group in subsequent meetings. The new information acquired is integrated in applied to the original problem, and more learning issues are generated and addressed. Each session is concluded with a brief summary of everything that was learned. When each case reaches its conclusion evaluation of the entire approach is necessary. This includes evaluating group interaction, communication skills, individual and group problem-solving approaches, resources used, and determining whether most of the learning objectives made by students and faculty were satisfied.

The premise behind the problem based approach is that it is conducive to learning and enhancing memory. The activation of prior knowledge, which occurs immediately after presenting the problem, and the subsequent elaboration that occurs, enhances information retrieval, and serves as a basis or new knowledge to be processed. Information storage processing and retrieval is greatly enhanced in Group discussion. Further the intrinsic interest in the learning issues that are generated from each case stimulates learning and increases the satisfaction of both students and faculty (Schmidt, 1993). Since the principles of cognitive learning are enhanced in a problem-based approach many medical schools have implemented this style into their curriculum. However, the approaches in many aspects of this instructional format differ from school to school. These differ-

ences include case selection, evaluation, type of tutor (expert or non expert) directedness and learning objectives to name a few.

Interprofessional Education:

Historically, the traditional method of learning includes uniprofessional ("silo-like") education where one profession is educated in isolation. The spectrum of learning, however, ranges from uniprofessional ("silo-like") to multi-professional (in "parallel") to interprofessional education (IPE).

"Interprofessional Education occurs when two or more professions learn with, from and about each other to improve collaboration and the quality of care." (CAIPE 2002). Effective interprofessional education works to improve the quality of patient care, focuses on the needs of service users and care providers, involves service users and care providers, encourages professions to learn with, from and about each other, respects the integrity and contribution of each profession, enhances practice within professions and increases professional satisfaction. (CAIPE 2002)

The overarching goal of interprofessional education is to promote interprofessional collaborative patient-centred practice. In our adaptation to this model, the Centre for Business will be transforming this goal as it relates to business practice. The patient now becomes the client. Huge demands are being placed on our business school graduates that will require more holistic thinking and collaborative efforts with experts in their respective fields. Just like in Medicine, the ability to bring in specialists at a specific time in the patient case, the business experts will have to be at the table working collaboratively on the "business issue or problem". Demands in the world of business whether public or private shareholders are increasing. Expecting the right decision at the right time is paramount in today's business environment. Companies and businesses are feeling pressured to provide more timely services, while at the same time working with finite human and financial resources. For these reasons, new ways of approaching the issues faced are needed, and different solutions will be required to meet future expectations and demands. In the Health world, Way et al (2000) define Inter-professional Collaboration as "an interprofessional process of communication and decision making that enables the separate and shared knowledge and skills of health care providers to synergistically influence the client/patient care provided." Patient-centred collaborative practice helps to promote the active participation of each discipline in patient care. Way et al (2000) list the seven elements of collaboration as being mutual trust and respect, autonomy, responsibility, communication, coordination, assertiveness and cooperation. With this reference the business graduates trained in an interprofessional manner will achieve the same depth of benefits that is seen in healthcare. There is increasing evidence that an interprofessional collaborative environment may offer benefits such as better client management and relationships, increased satisfaction of its customer base, better use of resources, less tension and conflict among management and employees, and easier recruitment of employees and finally lower rates of staff turnover rates.

The Romanow report (2002), indicated that "In view of ... changing trends, corresponding changes must be made in the way health care providers are educated and trained. If health care providers are expected to work together and share expertise in a team environment, it makes sense that their education and training should prepare them for this type of working arrangement." This same thinking can apply to College Business schools. Building cases and scenarios embracing

interprofessional education has begun in the transformational curricular changes. In Kouzes and Posners (2003) book "Leadership the Challenge" they stress that there are five key practices of exemplary leadership. One of the most important leadership elements described is coined "model the way". Arguments exist for IPE infusion both when students are starting their educational programme (early exposure) and when students are towards the end of their programme (delayed exposure). College Business programs need to identify the core competencies of knowledge, skills/behaviours and attitudes that should be taught and assessed so that a cohesive problem solving approach may be enacted by all members of the business team. What better way to teach competencies like collaborative teamwork, group dynamics and development, psychology of groups, conflict resolution than by modeling an interprofessional approach. Actions and modeling resonate better than words. Experiencing a mock real life scenario with reflection and critique will students well in their employment journey.

Business curriculum traditionally has been taught in isolation at different Colleges and Universities in North America. Opportunities need to be sought out and innovative linkages need to be explored with other health care education institutions that are working to incorporate interprofessional education as part of their core curriculum.

In current business world, companies constantly draw on collaborations from different functional teams to complete various tasks, especially the complex ones. For instance, if a private company secures a government contract to communicate and promote the COVID prevention and public safety strategies to diverse communities, the company would require its marketing, finance/accounting, management and human resources teams work closely and collaboratively with each other in order to deliver the desirable outcomes. In other words, each functional team not only needs to play its own function, but also have some general understanding of the roles of other teams and support/supply other teams with the resources when needed. In this case, to effectively push a message out to a targeted community, marketing team needs to research and understand the needs of that community. That requires human resources to hire the people with the right talent to carry out the research work. Finance/Accounting team needs to ensure all costs stay within the budget. And the project management team would provide planning and oversight on all those activities. Just like our human body, every organ carries out a specific function, while all organs function together to make our body work.

Centre for Business at George Brown College has four programing areas: marketing, management, human resources and finance/accounting. Students from all programs take a lot of common courses during their first year of study. This common sequencing of programs presents a great opportunity for business students to form cross-functional teams to practice collaborations, not only with students from the same program, but also students from different programs. The ability to work together on complex projects which simulate the real business environment is so valuable to the learner. This would also help students develop valuable skills to communicate effectively with people in different professions.

CONCLUSION:

As we futurescape the methodology underpinning the course offerings in the Centre for Business, the institution will need to infuse scenario based interprofessional education and training such that:

1. We ensure students have the core competencies, especially communication and numeracy skills, required by employers.
2. We deliver programs in innovative ways that meet the increasingly diverse needs of our learners.
3. We build the most comprehensive and highest quality field education program in order to allow students to apply classroom knowledge in the real world work environment.
4. We put in place strong academic leadership and supporting processes required to deliver excellence in teaching and learning.
5. We maintain a continuous quality improvement process of ongoing academic management with respect to case and scenario development.
6. We design specific institutional investments in the development of training programs for Faculty to be facilitators in the scenario based interprofessional curriculum.
7. We coordinate implementation of strategic course outlines and schedules mapping to achieve a coming together of students and professors working together.

If we transform the curriculum with PBL underpinned with Interprofessional Education principles and practice, our business graduates will leave College with a competitive advantage that will serve them well in their pursuit of employment and in their careers. The world of employment has changed and we must transform the curriculum to meet our industry partners and sectors needs now. The

future will be quite bright for those are the recipients of this new way of learning.

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